

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-44 are rejected.

Claims 3, 26, 30, and 33 are objected to.

Claim 17 has been cancelled.

New claims 45-47 have been added.

Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19-22, 32, 34-37, 41, and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,257,981 to Acres et al. ("Acres"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 34, for example, defines a rule generator comprising a plurality of selectable bonus promotion criteria. The examiner cites Col. 8, lines 40-58 of the prior art Acres reference as disclosing this limitation. But that portion only describes a module that allows each gaming machine to communicate with a floor controller on the network. Especially as amended, claim 34 now defines the selectable bonus promotion criteria as including three categories of selectable items: 1) bonus game triggering criteria; 2) visual activities for display when the bonus game is triggered; and 3) items of value awarded to the bonus game winner. Nowhere in the cited reference is it disclosed or suggested that any item from one of these categories can be matched with one or more items from other categories, which essentially creates a new bonus game experience for the player. While the prior art reference does disclose awarding items of value, such as points and credits, it does not disclose selecting a bonus game triggering criteria, selecting a visual activity for display when the selected criteria is met, and selecting an item of value to be awarded to the winner. In other words, an operator of the networked games can mix and match features in each of these categories to change the gaming experience. The prior art Acres reference does not disclose or suggest any such thing.

Claim 1 has also been amended to further define the claimed invention as a method for an operator of networked gaming machines to remotely configure a bonus game on the network. The operator selects—at a configuration workstation—at least one of a plurality of possible bonus game triggering criteria displayed in a list. No such selection is disclosed in the prior art Acres patent. The operator further selects at least one of a plurality of possible visual activities displayed in a list. There is no selection from among a plurality of possible visual activities in the prior art Acres patent. In claim 1, when the selected triggering criterion is detected, the bonus game is triggered and the selected visual activity is displayed.

New claim 45, which depends from claim 1 highlights the advantages. After selecting a first paired triggering event and visual display, the operator can change the bonus game by

selecting a second paired triggering event and visual display, each different from the event and display in the first pair. Such flexibility is not disclosed in the prior art.

Likewise, claim claims 41 and 43 are similarly amended to define pluralities of possible triggering criteria, visual activities, and items of value that can be paired together in different combinations responsive to selection of those items. New claim 46 is an apparatus claim that defines a workstation including a monitor and means for selecting at least one bonus game triggering criteria and at least one visual activity. These selections are made by an operator of the networked gaming machines from lists of bonus game triggering criteria and visual activities displayed on a monitor. This is not disclosed in the prior art.

The claims that were objected to as lacking antecedent basis have been amended to address the objection.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-16 and 18-47 of the application as amended is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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